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Value of Military Equipment Furnished by the USSR to Members of the Sino-Soviet Bloc Since World War II

The value of the major items of military hardware supplied between 1947-60 to other countries of the Sino-Soviet Bloc by the USSR is estimated to have totaled some 6 billion dollars in terms of 1960 US prices as shown in the attached table. This figure is offered with great reservation as to its reflection of the real value of Soviet military aid.

The value given has been derived by valuing the land armaments, aircraft, ships, and electronic equipment estimated to have been in the orders of battle of the Bloc countries with 1960 US dollar equivalents of the prices which the Soviet military establishment is estimated to have paid for the material. Thus, the equipment is valued as if new and unused. Initial spares are included but it has not been possible in the time available to compute the value of operating spares, ammunition, support equipment, small arms, or major equipment attrited during the period. The cost of the material lost during the Korean War is not included.

Equipment in the military establishments of the Bloc countries are usually at least one generation behind that of the Soviet military forces and as such may have seen heavy use by the Soviets before release to the other Bloc countries. While some items may have been supplied at no cost to the recipient, in other cases the recipient countries may have paid substantial prices. In any case, the out-of-pocket cost to the USSR of the equipment herein covered probably has been a fraction of the magnitude suggested by the figure cited above.

No attempt has been made to compute the cost of the Soviet military advisory missions or training groups sent to the Bloc countries. In most cases the Bloc countries probably have borne the burden of paying and maintaining the Soviet groups within their countries, either directly or within the framework of an over-all military assistance agreement. In the early part of the period, 1946-55 the Soviet advisory and training groups were very large, often numbering in the thousands. In the later part of the period, 1956-60 and especially since 1958, the Soviet groups have been reduced in size and have been operating in Europe under the aegis of the Warsaw Pact command. Substantial numbers of Bloc regular cadre, particularly senior officers, have also been trained at military institutions within the USSR during the entire period.

Construction of military facilities in the European satellities in which the USSR had a hand has most frequently been associated with the Soviet occupational forces. Upon withdrawal or reduction of Soviet forces the installations have been turned over to the Bloc countries. Data permitting a valuation of facilities thus acquired by the Bloc is not available nor is

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information available relating to the financial details of their being turned over.

The military and technical assistance received from the USSR has been vital in developing the Chinese aircraft industry and the Chinese air force. Without this aid it would have been impossible for China to develop an aircraft industry and a large military air force within the relatively short period of ten years. It is believed that assistance has involved aid in construction of aircraft plants, tooling for the plants, installation of the machinery and guidance in both experimental and series production. Chinese technicians have been trained in the USSR, and Soviet personnel have worked in the Chinese aircraft plants. Although this assistance was readily apparent in the Chinese First Five Year Plan (1953-1957) the Chinese received technical aid at least through mid-1960.

Although aid from the USSR has been paramount, the European Satellites also have provided technical assistance to the Chinese aircraft industry. Poland in particular has assisted in the construction of glider plants, and wind tunnels have been received from East Germany. Specialists from the Satellites have assembled and serviced equipment and have worked in the installations imported from the Satellites.

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